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RUEHJI/AMCONSUL JEDDAH PRIORITY 1634
RUEHJM/AMCONSUL JERUSALEM PRIORITY 2483
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STATE FOR NEA, NEA/IPA, NEA/PPD

WHITE HOUSE FOR PRESS OFFICE, SIT ROOM
NSC FOR NEA STAFF

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HQ USAF FOR X0XX
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CDR USCENTCOM MACDILL AFB FL FOR POLAD/USIA ADVISOR
COMSOCEUR VAIHINGEN GE FOR PAO/POLAD
COMSIXTHFLT FOR 019

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PARIS ALSO FOR POL
ROME FOR MFO

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SUBJECT: ISRAEL MEDIA REACTION

SUBJECTS COVERED IN THIS REPORT:

Mideast

Key stories in the media:

Leading media reported that yesterday PM Benjamin Netanyahu told visiting U.S. National Security Advisor Gen. James Jones that Israel will act to ease the lives of the Palestinians but that the crossings into Gaza will remain closed until Gilad Shalit is released. Media reported that, for the first time in months, Israel

will transfer a limited quantity of concrete and iron to the Palestinians. (Yediot's headline: QCracks in the Siege.Q) Israel Radio and other media reported that the IDF is attempting to prevent those materials from being used for fortifications or tunnels.

Israel Radio reported that today NSA Jones met with President Shimon Peres as well as opposition leader and Kadima head, Tzipi Livni. Leading media reported that former FM Livni told NSA Jones that the Middle East is keeping a close eye on the international community's efforts to halt Iran's nuclear weapons program. Media reported that the 15-member delegation headed by Jones includes special State Department adviser Dennis Ross and Under Secretary of State for Political Affairs William Burns. Israel Radio quoted a Qsenior source in JerusalemQ as saying that Israel clarified to the U.S. that Iran is dashing toward procuring nuclear capability; the source reportedly said that the Americans were told that, should there be no change in the Iranian attitude, significant sanctions should be applied and that no options should be ruled out.

Israel Radio quoted Egyptian FM Ahmed Abu al-Gheit as saying that President Obama's call for normalization of relations with Israel should be heeded -- if Israel dismantles the settlements.

Yediot quoted senior associates of PM Netanyahu as saying that the PM told Special Envoy Senator Mitchell that he will not leave Syrian President Bashar Assad a Qdeposit on the Golan.

Israel Radio reported that yesterday, in testimony to the House of RepresentativesQ Foreign Affairs Committee, U.S. Ambassador to the U.N., Susan Rice, expressed her concern about the fact that UNIFIL does not stop weapons smuggling into South Lebanon.

HaQaretz quoted Israeli intelligence officials as saying that the smuggling industry into the Gaza Strip is like a long funnel, at one end of which are the tunnels in the Strip and the other is the Sinai Peninsula as far as the Red Sea coast. A reported decline in weapons smuggling has forced Hamas militants in Gaza to invest more effort in producing weapons locally. Technical experts in Israel are divided over whether Hamas can meet this challenge, although its desire to do so is not in question. The organization is apparently not currently seeking renewed military conflict with Israel, however. It would like the lull to continue so it can rebuild its operational capabilities, which were severely impaired by Operation Cast Lead in January.

Yediot reported that, for the first time, the Foreign Ministry has decided to appoint a legal adviser at the Israeli Embassy in The Hague to prepare for International Court of Justice debates on Operation Cast Lead. The Jerusalem Post and Israel Hayom reported that IDF Judge Advocate-General Brig. Gen. Avichai Mandelblit has reportedly ordered the Military Police to launch criminal investigations into 14 cases of alleged criminal conduct during the operation. HaQaretz quoted says Brig. Gen. Eli Shermeister, the IDF's chief education officer, as saying that there has been a sharp rise in requests from the army's combat units to the Education Corps for material on military ethics and "values during wartime. Speaking at a seminar yesterday in Jerusalem on "War and Peace in Jewish Heritage," Shermeister acknowledged an inherent tension between protecting soldiers and avoiding harm to innocent civilians.

The seminar was sponsored by the Beit Morasha center for Jewish studies [an institution that bestows joint graduate degrees with Bar-Ilan University]. With regard to the ongoing conflict between the Education Corps and the IDF Rabbinate, Shermeister said that "responsibility for education and Jewish identity is officially conferred on the Education Corps, and that's how it has to be." He extended an olive branch to the Rabbinate in saying "it has great educational capacities and we must not fail to use them." HaQaretz quoted a senior IDF source as saying that Rabbis for Human Rights, the sponsor of another seminar held today in Jerusalem, has set itself a goal of harming the army. The seminar's sponsor called the army's failure to send a representative "surprising," and said it raised questions about the IDF's willingness to examine its own conduct. An IDF spokesman denied a boycott of public discussion of the army's conduct, and said the army tries to send representatives to conferences on Operation Cast Lead whenever possible, but it was not possible in this instance.

Leading media reported that yesterday an Israeli military court

convicted Fuad Shubaki, a former Arafat aide, of bankrolling a 2002 attempt to smuggle 50 tons of weapons by sea. The IDF said that Shubaki would be sentenced at the end of August.

Maariv and Israel Hayom quoted Lawrence (Larry) Franklin, a former senior analyst at the Pentagon, who was accused of revealing secret information to Israel, as saying in an interview with The Washington Post, that the FBI used him as a double agent.

Media reports and commentaries, such as the Ha'aretz editorial ("Don't Expel Children"), prominently feature the issue of the anticipated expulsion of illegal migrants from Israel.

Yediot and Israel Radio reported that an agreement is taking shape with the U.S. to send a second Israeli astronaut into space. Yediot noted that there are no slots in the NASA programs until 2015.

HaQaretz reported that a senior engineer at El-Op Electro Optics Industries is under investigation for fraud, breach of trust, and conflict of interests spanning more than a decade. A court did not allow the publication of the individual's name or exact position, due to Qnational security concerns.

All media reported that yesterday PM Netanyahu and health officials decided to buy swine flu vaccines for the entire population. This would be the first such move in Israel. The Health Ministry has warned that more than 700,000 people are expected to catch the virus. However, some senior health officials have questioned the plan, saying it would be impossible to vaccinate everyone. Yediot reported that the Bank of Israel is expected to stop its practice of buying \$100 million every day, but that it will continue to purchase foreign currency periodically.

Israel Hayom published the results of a poll that the religious public has become more extreme in its views with regard to a possible evacuation of settlements in the future. The survey, carried out by Mutagim Market Research and Gal-Oren BSD [an ultra-Orthodox advertising company] found that 79% of the national-religious public would fight against evacuation of settlements in the Land of Israel [Israel, including the territories], with 16% saying "everything must be done so that

settlements are not removed, even if this means attacking police and soldiers." 75% of the religious would disobey if the order was given to evacuate (36% of the national-religious public would disobey orders, and 39% would ask not take part in evacuating). Another surprising figure is the position of the religious to the possibility of two states for two peoples: a quarter (25%) of the national-religious public think that ultimately there will be "two states for two peoples," and one out of four national-religious people think that the future establishment of a Palestinian state is an established fact. Israel Hayom quoted Meir Gal and Dr. Avi Peer, who conducted the poll, as saying: "Four years after disengagement from Gush Katif, the national-religious public's scars are not healing. Everything is as open as it as, and it appears that its score with the state that disengaged them from the land of their forefathers remains fairly open."

Mideast:

Block Quotes:

I. "A New Palestine"

Senior commentator Ari Shavit wrote in the independent, left-leaning Ha'aretz (7/30): QRemember the name: Rawabi. The city of hills to be built nine kilometers northwest of Ramallah. The first planned city in Palestinian history. The first planned city in the West Bank to be inhabited by Palestinians rather than settlers. A city designed to be a Palestinian city of abundance -- secular, open and vibrant.... A city that will pave the Palestinians' way to the 21st century.... As a result of [Palestinian Authority leadership policies and Israeli easing measures] Arab and Western investors are once again investing in Palestine.... In Israel there is little talk of Fayyad's revolution. Since the lynching in Ramallah, most

Israelis have erased it from the map of their awareness. They have no interest in the Palestinians, one way or another. However, even Israelis who have taken it on themselves to defend Palestinian rights do not always show an interest in Palestinians as human beings. They prefer them as victims.... Rawabi is both a symbol and a test of the new sanity.... But for Rawabi to become a reality, Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu and Defense Minister Ehud Barak must give the Palestinian Authority control over the land corridor that will link it to Ramallah. They must cut the red tape and let the city of the future receive water, electricity and access roads. There is now a real opportunity in the West Bank. We must not miss it.

II. Points of Forgery and Fraud

Professor Asher Susser, who teaches Middle East history at Tel Aviv University, wrote in HaQaretz (7/30): QThrough their actions, the settlers not only undermine the legitimacy of settlement in the territories, they also undermine international legitimacy for the very existence of Israel. The grave results are in plain view. Zionism's just cause and existential interests are grounded in the equality and mutuality of partition. David Ben-Gurion understood this even during the Arab Revolt more than 70 years ago, as did the international community in its support of partition in 1947. It also reflects the international consensus today. It is patently apparent that, beyond the issue of basic justice, dividing the land is also in the clear interest of Zionism and anyone who wants to maintain Israel as the state of the Jews. In the arrogance of their position, which tramples on the rights of others, the settlers are compromising the foundations of the justice of the Zionist enterprise, and acting against the State of Israel's existential interests. By making the Land of Israel the supreme value over and above the State of Israel, they are joining, in a bizarre way, their left-wing post-Zionist Qbrothers,Q who also propose a single state that will succeed the state of the Jews.

III. "They're Going Dry"

Middle East affairs commentator Dr. Guy Bechor, a lecturer at the Interdisciplinary Center, wrote in the mass-circulation, pluralist Yediot Aharonot (7/30): QSyria is undergoing an economic holocaust. There is no other way to describe what the Syrian regime is making such an effort to conceal. The country is going dry; more than one quarter of a million farmers have been forced, over the past three years, to abandon their lands and migrate to the major cities. There they live in tents, completely abandoned by the regime. This data recently emerged in a special study conducted by the UN and was published on the Al-Arabiya Web site. The great Euphrates, Syria's most important source of fresh water, is going dry.... Now with the horrible drought, some 20 million residents, half of whom live in agricultural regions, are suffering the consequences. Syria is importing its crops these days, and it has no money to do so. Syria has an existential interest to get its hands on the Sea of Galilee in order to pump its waters and irrigate the fields in the areas of Damascus, Aleppo and Homs. Our poor Sea of Galilee, whose waters today are already used by Israel and Jordan (we supply the latter with a regular amount every year as part of the peace treaty). If Syria gets its hands on the Sea of Galilee, it will pump large quantities of water from it. The same way it devastated its rivers and aquifers, so will it devastate our main source of water. It is setting its sights on it, despite the fact that it has no interest in peace with Israel. Should Israel pay the price for the errors and pathetic conduct of the Syrian BaQathist party? Furthermore: When one sees the extent to which Turkey is exploiting Syria, should we really choose the Turks to mediate between us and the Syrians? After all, Turkey has an existential interest that the Syrians get the Sea of Galilee; this would take the pressure off of them. Before any possible commencement of negotiations with Syria, it is important that we are familiar with these data and be cautious. It must be hoped that the Americans, who want to advance negotiations on the Syrian track, will also inform them of this.

IV. "Let Us Go up to Zion"

Conservative columnist and Jewish affairs writer Nadav Shragai opined in HaQaretz (7/30): QQTisha B'Av [the day of the Jewish lament over the loss of biblical Jerusalem] will last forever, promised Kamal al-Khatib, deputy head of the Islamic Movement in Israel, to thousands of cheering Muslims at the Temple Mount a few days ago. Even the hearts of Jews far from the mountain saddened. Palestinian Preident Mahmoud Abbas mocked us in the same spirit a few months ago when he said, QCall yourself the Hbrew Socialist Republic -- it is none of my busiess.Q He refused to accept Israel's Jewish idenity.... Beside the [BibleQs] Book of Lamentations and the traditional laments, it is time to call, QArise! Let us go up to Zion,Q let us go to the Temple Mount. Within the limitations of halakha [Jewish religious law] and of police directives, not as a provocation or demonstration. A heritage trip to Morocco or Poland is all well and good, but going to the Temple Mount is the real heritage trip. A trip of consciousness and study, with maps and history books in the company of archaeologists, historians, rabbis, academics, educators and commanders. A trip intended to remind us where the Jewish people's genealogical record is buried in Jerusalem.

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